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CHAPTER VI.

TICKEL TO GEYLUM.

Casimiro's Household — Cargo-kalk — Quintuhual's Son — Woolkain — Partridges — Meeting with the Araucanians — The Cacique Quintuhual — Rapid-kalk — Araucanian Belles — Communication with Chupat Colony — Diplolk — Calfoora's Declaration of War — Tehuelches learn Fishing — My Indian Relatives — Woodland Rambles — An Indian Paradise — The Upper Chupat — Cushamen — Losing Horses — Official Functions — Message from Las Manzanas — Blessing the Liquor — Casimiro Intoxicated — Foyel's Encampment — Great Parliamento — Foyel's Idiom — Gatchen-kalk — Arrival at Geylum.

ON January 21 the word was given to march, and all the united forces of the Tehuelches, numbering 200 men, with the usual allowance of women and children, prepared to advance to join the Araucanos. Ten toldos, forming Crimé's party, lingered behind, in consequence of the continued sickness of this caciquillo, who, however, sent word that he would follow in our rear. 621

All the horses were in excellent condition, and it was with great delight that I saw the immense cavalcade set out. Our family party in Casimiro's toldo included, besides the chief and his wife, sons, and little daughter Chingook, an old brother-in-law, Kai, nicknamed Chileno, and his wife and son Macho; and an old deaf and dumb woman of most repulsive aspect. The only good feature in Casimiro's character was his charity. He was always ready to afford an asylum to any destitute or infirm people, and his toldo was never without some such object of his pity. My honourable 592 [736]

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possible and pay another visit to the toldo, where I had been made to feel myself at home.

Her father asked me to procure him a grinding organ, as Casimiro had informed him that he had seen music made by turning a handle. I promised to get one if I could, and after a cordial farewell returned to our toldo, as we intended going away at daylight on the 17th.

Accordingly we prepared for a start; and a boy came over from the other toldos to join us. He was a Tehuelche, whose father had been killed on suspicion of witchcraft, and being a remote connexion of Casimiro's, had claimed his protection, which of course was granted, and he (Casimiro) had agreed to take him with us, informing him that he was to act as my page, look after my horses, &c., and make himself generally useful. This was a very fine idea, but one glance at the face and figure of this illustrious youth was sufficient to show me that I should probably spend my time in looking after him, and a more mischievous imp I never saw. When told that he might catch one of my horses to travel on, he immediately fixed on the wrong one, and a horse that I had myself barely mounted for perhaps six weeks, in order to get it into condition for the journey into Patagones.

This horse he caught, and came down to the toldos at full gallop over rocks, stones, and bushes, with a grin of delight on his face. After being warned in mild terms that he was not to ride that horse, which I took from him and turned loose, he proceeded to catch one of Casimiro's, which he treated in the same manner, but at length got the right one, and then, without saying 'With your leave, or by your leave,' galloped off, yelling at the top of his voice, to follow the road which the Indians had taken the previous day.

We were about to start ourselves when, at the last moment, Quintuhual sent to say that he wished to have a council. So Casimiro and myself remained in the pouring rain squatting on the grass listening to a repetition of what we had heard the previous day.

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drunken brawl since our departure, and that a rumour was cur- 203
rent that the Valdivians had had their cattle taken from them, and various other stories, most of which were declared to be lies by Orkeke, who, having lost a horse, had returned to look for it in Geylum; the budget of alarming news thus proving to be a fresh illustration of the Indian's proneness to invent if they have nothing of real importance wherewith to astonish their hearers. Crimé's widow took up her abode in our toldo; [736]
and as, by this chief's death, the post of capitanejo, with the 622
rank of lieutenant in the Buenos Ayrean army, and the right of drawing rations, was vacant, Casimiro consulted me as to his successor. But successive proposals of those who seemed most fit, beginning with Wáki, were objected to by the cacique, who at last declared that he should name his almost insane son Graviel as the chief to be placed by the Argentine Government upon the list of the caciques to be conciliated by annual pay! On April 22 a start was made, but we remained to the last, as four of Casimiro's horses which I had brought down to the valley the previous evening were missing, so the chieftain returned to look for them, and the rest of the toldo pursued their journey.

After taking a farewell look at the Cordillera, which was 133
presently shut out from view by the hills, the counterslope of which we descended, a hurried march led us through a very barren rocky country entangled in broken irregular hills, with scarcely a bush to shelter under, and little or no pasture. We encamped, or rather reached the camp after 261
it was pitched, in a cañon containing a small spring and a very little green pasture, and went to bed supperless, as, not being in time for the hunt, and game being very scarce, what we could beg from our neighbours was naturally given to those recovering from sickness.

Jackechan's wife and child were still very unwell, and, as 755
the child was supposed to be dying, the doctor was sent for. He proceeded to cure it by laying it on the ground, muttering a charm and patting it on the head; after which he put